

Integrating Text Messaging into Your eCRM Communications

By Jamie Schissler, Strategy Director, Razorfish eCRM Solutions

SMS Text (Short Message Service) and multimedia messaging (MMS) provide a relatively easy and low-cost communication channel that can generate large returns for your eCRM program.

As with other digital communication channels, there are three overarching considerations to bear in mind when setting up your SMS program: 1) how your program will function (workflow), 2) messaging infrastructure and technology requirements (the SMS gateway of the mobile marketing platform), and 3) targeting and reporting. To understand the variations and operations of an SMS program and how these pieces work together, let's look at the role each plays and the various considerations.

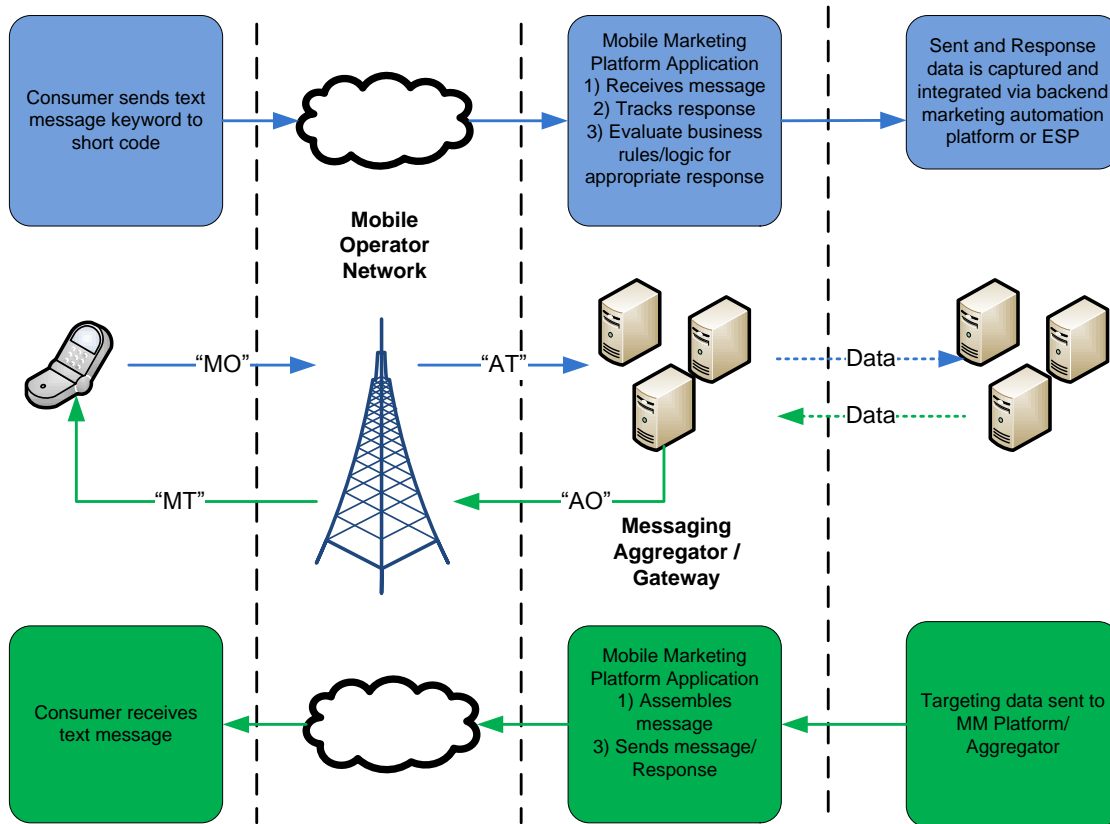
Workflow: SMS programs and campaigns range from promotional text-to-vote and sweepstakes entries, to reminders, alerts, and updates. In SMS parlance, these are classified as either Mobile Originated / Application Terminated programs ("MO" and "AT"), or Application Originated / Mobile Terminated programs ("AO" and "MT"). The primary difference between them lies in how the program begins. A sweepstakes or poll in which the consumer is prompted via media to text a message to a short code is considered a Mobile Originated message: the consumer initiates the communication from his handheld by texting a message to a short code. The vote is recorded and the communication ends, or "terminates" on the application side (the mobile marketing platform). Content pushed to the device, such as a stock update, game score, appointment reminder, or news headlines, is classified as an Application Originated message: based on the rules defined in the mobile Marketing Platform, a message is deployed, such as a news item or promotion, from the application and ends with the consumer's receipt of the message.

Technology and Infrastructure: Both the Mobile Marketing Platform and SMS gateway are typically provided via a 3rd party service, such as [Clickatell](#) or [Waterfall Mobile](#), to name just two. These service providers maintain the relationships, communication protocols, and infrastructure necessary to automate large-scale deployment and reception of SMS and MMS messages across wireless networks (i.e. Verizon, Sprint, ATT, etc). The Mobile Marketing Platform allows the marketer to establish communication rules and define content, while the gateway sends the messages across wireless networks.

Targeting and Data: With the workflow established and gateway provider defined, the third piece is targeting and data updates. How this is set up is largely dependent on the organizational infrastructure and customer data management strategy. Similar to an email program where a list of email addresses is loaded into the email delivery platform for deployment, targeting criteria is defined, and send and response data is captured; the only data generally sent to the gateway provider and mobile marketing platform is the consumer's phone

number. A backend system, such as marketing automation platform, sends these numbers via an API to the mobile marketing platform and records send and response data.

Today, many ESPs (Email Service Providers), such as Exact Target and Silverpop, are integrating SMS messaging into their platforms. They establish the relationships with a gateway provider, integrate with the API, leverage the email platform's inherent targeting capabilities, and capture send and response data.



Common Short Codes (CSC), keywords, and interactive campaigns

Short codes are the equivalent of an email address. They are typically a four to six digit sequence that identifies the specific SMS/MMS program, and are either randomly generated or branded. Keywords sent to the shortcode dictate the type of content the consumer is interested in receiving or desired action. For example, texting the keyword "HELP" may return additional information to the consumer about the service, product or program, while texting the keyword "STOP" may indicate the consumer's request to opt-out. In this way, SMS programs can be interactive and looped. For example, an appointment reminder can be sent to the customer, who can then, using a keyword, request directions, which will then be sent automatically to the device. The consumer could then respond to that message with another keyword to reschedule or have a representative call, and so on.

Costs

Pricing is typically structured based on an initial setup fee and monthly CPM tiers, not including any backend data integration. Depending on the short code and keywords selected, set-up

costs can range from \$1,000 and up. CPMs are based on monthly minimum commitments from 15,000 messages/month and up, with per message costs from \$0.11 and down, based on volume.

SMS Rules

There is currently no legislation for SMS similar to CAN-SPAM for email. However, CAN-SPAM should be adhered to as a minimum threshold for SMS programs. Messages should only be sent to consumers who have opted in to specific programs, and they should at any time be able to opt out easily. Failure to adhere to best practices will not only alienate and irritate consumers, but could get your program shut down by the gateway provider, or blocked by the wireless carrier.

An SMS program is easy to set up and can usually be operational within three to six weeks, depending on the backend system. Please contact Razorfish eCRM solutions with any questions.

About Razorfish™

Razorfish is one of the largest interactive marketing and technology companies in the world, and also one of the largest buyers of digital advertising space. With a demonstrated commitment to innovation, Razorfish counsels its clients on how to leverage digital channels such as the Web, mobile devices, in-store technologies and other emerging media to engage people, build brand loyalty and provide excellent customer service. The company is increasingly advising marketers on Social Influence Marketing™, its approach for employing social media and social influencers to achieve the marketing and business needs of an organization. Its award-winning client teams provide solutions through their strategic counsel, digital advertising and content creation, media buying, analytics, technology and user experience. Razorfish has offices in markets across the United States, and in Australia, China, France, Germany, Japan and the United Kingdom. Clients--many of them served in multiple markets--include Carnival Cruise Lines, Coors Brewing Company, Levi's, McDonald's and Starwood Hotels. Visit <http://www.razorfish.com> for more information.

Razorfish

821 2nd Avenue, Suite 1800

Seattle, WA 98104

Phone: 206.816.8800

Fax: 206.816.8808